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"According to interview data, black male faculty feel isolated, and they are struggling to connect with the black male students who they believe are also isolated and struggling."

In keeping with previous research, the faculty members at this institution reported that the goal of the community college is different than that of four-year institutions in higher education. Most faculty see their work as providing educational opportunities for disadvantaged students thus they derive satisfaction from the successes of these students. Focus group members expressed a great deal of concern and perceived responsibility for their students' achievement. As they generally stated, many of the students were there in a nontraditional sense seeking a second chance at obtaining an education or attempting to gain an education under circumstances which were difficult. At this college, students are generally perceived as being numerous and under-prepared. As expected, faculty became frustrated with their lack of success in such an institution which is intended to provide an avenue for these students to become successful. Due to the feelings of frustration experienced by these faculty, many become detached from taking personal responsibility for student failures, while others assume additional responsibility for the success of these students, resulting in additional stress and role conflict for those faculty.

Furthermore, there is consensus in the perceived difficulty to reach some of the students who need help the most, especially with black males. Many of the faculty also expressed frustration with the administrative process and administrative members because they perceived them as barriers to things which would potentially assist the students. Spanning each group was a tone of frustration with a bureaucratic system and uncooperative administration for denying them additional opportunities to reach students whom they already felt were in precarious educational positions. Even with these perceived setbacks, the smaller successes with individual students tend to outweigh the more numerous and regular failures that faculty experience.

Black faculty are perceiving their roles to be even more stressful because of the struggle that they see in the black male students whom they teach. The black men's focus group spoke at length concerning the difficulty in reaching out to black male students. According to the interview data, black male faculty feel isolated, and they are struggling to connect with the black male students who they believe are also isolated and struggling. The irony, however, lies in the fact that the very reasons the black male faculty members make such strong attempts to reach their black male students are those same reasons they

feel the students do not respond, or respond less than was hoped. In their isolation and struggle, the black male students may be less likely to accept the concern, advice or assistance of even a black male faculty member. So, black male faculty feel frustration in not being able to help the students for whom they serve as role models, which only exacerbates their stress-related role issues. These faculty feel a circle of isolation and frustration. In their attempts to resolve it, they struggle to break the cycle and help set their black male students on a competitive and equal level with other students.

Presenters:

Dr. Corbin holds a master's degree in Clinical Child Psychology from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (1991) and a doctorate in Educational Psychology from Catholic University in Washington, DC (1998). He began his academic career teaching as an adjunct at several colleges and universities in the DC Metropolitan area while he completed his doctorate, which included a full-time appointment at West Virginia State College, and now Northern Virginia Community College. Additionally, he is currently the Assistant Director of Education at the Computer Learning Center in Alexandria, Virginia. His research interest is in the area of trust issues and relationship dynamics in academia.

Adisa Ajamu is the founder and director of the Atunwa Collective, an African family development think tank in Washington, DC. He is a graduate of Concordia University in Irvine, California where he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology. He is currently a graduate student in developmental psychology at Howard University.